

# TOASTMASTER: Leading The Meeting

The role of the Toastmaster is to **lead the meeting**.

**You are also responsible for printing the agenda (updated with any changes that you have been made aware of) and bringing enough copies for everyone to the meeting. Please let a committee member know in advance if this is difficult for you.**

Being Toastmaster is a great chance to exercise your confidence, creativity and leadership.

These are important life skills which can be directly transferred to almost anything you do outside of Toastmasters.

As the Toastmaster, you're in charge of organising the meeting, setting the theme for the meeting, introducing and transitioning between speakers, and keeping everything in the meeting flowing smoothly.

The goal of the Toastmaster role is to run the meeting *as if it were a 'real world' function*, like a wedding reception, seminar, or training session.

(Remember, you can't "practice" the real wedding reception over again – you can only do that once. But you can perform as Toastmaster as many times as you'd like!)

This is your chance to inject your personality into our club meetings!

## The Key Elements of being Toastmaster:

- Set the theme of the meeting
- Open with meeting with energy and enthusiasm
- Give appropriate introductions for each speaker
- Keep the meeting flowing smoothly

## How To Prepare as Toastmaster:

- Contact your fellow club members (often via email) to *set a meeting theme* of your choosing.
- In this email, you should *ask a question* which will evoke interesting and engaging responses. These responses will be used to introduce members who have speaking roles during the meeting.

These answers are used in lieu of a ‘real world’ laudatory introduction, as would be the case in a real function or seminar, where the MC would detail the speaker’s history, life, and work.

- The Vice President Education will have created and circulated the agenda for your meeting, so it’s a good idea to be familiar with who will be performing what role.
- There are likely going to be changes to the agenda in the days and hours leading up to the meeting. Reshuffling of the agenda and roles thereof will often happen mostly in the minutes before the start of the meeting. Be aware of any changes to the agenda beforehand, in order to keep the meeting flowing smoothly.

### How to Perform as Toastmaster:

- **Opening The Meeting:** When you’re first introduced as Toastmaster, this is your chance to introduce your chosen meeting theme and elaborate upon it. You can tell a personal story, anecdote, joke, anything to set the mood and get people acquainted with the theme for the meeting.
- Right here after your opening, is a good chance to announce any changes to the agenda, so that the audience isn’t confused and distracted later on.

The main crux of your role as Toastmaster will be *introductions*.

- **Introductions** are critically important. It’s been shown that some speakers at highly-paid seminars can sell 3-4x as much of their products (*or not!*) solely depending on who introduces them before they speak. (*Crazy ... but true.*)

The best way to introduce people is using the question responses you’ve gathered, and from these you can create something along the lines of this template:

“Next up is our Table Topics Evaluation.

Today’s Table Topics are being evaluated by a person who *really* likes the colour green.

To evaluate today’s Table Topics session, please welcome John!” [LEAD APPLAUSE]

(Introduce what role or section of the meeting is coming next, then lead with their question response as the bulk of the introduction, then repeat the role and ask the audience to welcome [the person’s name].)

- **Introducing Project Speeches** requires a bit of forethought. When it comes to introducing Project Speeches - **please ask the evaluator of the speech to stand up first**, and read out the objectives for the speech (which will often include the Manual Name and Project #). After the evaluator has concluded, proceed with your regular introduction spiel:

“Our first speaker is someone who  
absolutely *hates* Gummi-Bears.

With her speech entitled “Weekends”,  
please welcome Susan.” [LEAD APPLAUSE]

Again, lead with the role (speaker) and question response. Introduce the name of the speech first, then the speaker’s name. (Be sure to learn the speakers’ speech titles beforehand!)

- **Closing The Meeting:** Remember to thank your audience (and say a few parting words) before you call up the Club President for the general business session and an official close to the meeting.

### After The Meeting:

- **Nothing!** You’re done!

Liaise with your fellow club members and enjoy a job well done.

### [Advanced] Taking Toastmaster Even Further:

- Being Toastmaster is about managing the mood of the room, keeping everyone engaged and entertained, and acting to keep the meeting flowing smoothly. Do your best to keep everyone’s attention throughout the meeting.
- Be ready to take the stage quickly after each speaker finishes speaking. This means sitting or standing off to the side, near the front, for easy and seamless access to the stage.
- Remember to *lead the applause* after you introduce someone to the stage, or as someone leaves the stage. As Toastmaster, it’s your responsibility to begin applauding so that everyone else can follow your lead.
- Shake each speaker’s hand as they *both enter and leave the stage*. This is crucial to keep the meeting from feeling awkward and disjointed. Think of it as ‘passing the baton’ of stage presence from yourself to the next speaker, and back again afterwards.
- Keep the energy buzzing through your introductions, transitions and general delivery and stage presence any time you’re addressing the audience.
- Being Toastmaster is a lot about nuance, creativity and expression. You’ll find you can vary the introduction templates given, but some variations work better than others.

For example, you might find that you lose a bit of steam if you “reveal” who the speaker is too soon, or if you forget to mention the meeting role and haphazardly “tack it on” at the end, for instance. Play around with it!

- Try to learn the titles of each speech being presented at your meeting – this will give your introductions an added touch of professionalism.
- Try transitions! **Transitions** are much the same as introductions. Once a speaker leaves the stage, *make a polite comment on their topic or content* and relate it back to yourself, the audience or the theme of the meeting – anything works, as long as you keep things flowing smoothly. In a Toastmasters meeting, you’ll often move from a transition straight back into another introduction.
- Finally, this is *your meeting*.

You’re running it, just as if you were MC’ing an important function.

Make choices, be confident, take it where you want to go, and infuse your personality into the proceedings. Mechanically, it’s a fairly simple role, but the creative possibilities are endless.

# Thank you – and have fun!